State Candidate Checklist

Important Things to Remember

- **File Form 501 (Candidate Intention)**
  You must file Form 501 before soliciting, raising or spending any money in connection with your election. The only exception to this requirement is for personal funds you will spend for a filing fee or ballot statement fee. (See Chapter 5.)
- **Open a Campaign Bank Account**
  All monetary contributions (including **all** personal and/or business funds you use for your campaign) must be deposited in the campaign bank account before being spent.[1] **Never** deposit campaign contributions in your personal account. (See Chapter 2.)
- **File Form 410 (Statement of Organization)**
  Once you receive or spend $1,000 or more in a calendar year, you must file a Form 410 as a recipient committee within 10 days. The name of the committee must include your last name. You must designate a treasurer. (See Chapter 5.)
- **Keep Good Records**
  All candidates and committees are subject to audit. Detailed records of contributions and expenditures of $25 or more are required and must be retained for at least four years. If contributor information (name, address, occupation, and employer) is not obtained within 60 days, the contribution must be returned. (See Chapter 2.)
- **File Campaign Reports On Time**
  Filing schedules are posted on the FPPC website at *www.fppc.ca.gov.* You must file regular campaign statements (Form 460) disclosing all receipts and expenditures at least twice each year—and up to six times during an election year. (See Chapter 6.) Late filing fees and other penalties may be assessed if reports are not filed on time.
- **Electronic Filing**
  If you receive contributions or make expenditures totaling $50,000 or more, you are required to file all Form 460 campaign statements electronically with the Secretary of State. In addition to Form 460, you must electronically file Form 497:
  - Within 10 days if you receive a contribution of $5,000 or more from a single source at any time other than the 90-day election cycle (including after your election); and
  - Within 24 hours if you receive a contribution of $1,000 or more from a single source during the 90-day election cycle. (See Chapter 6.)
- **Itemize Contributions and Expenditures of $100 or More**
  Detailed information must be disclosed for contributors of $100 or more and for expenditures of $100 or more. (See Chapter 7.) If contributor information (name, address, occupation, and employer) is not obtained within 60 days of receiving a contribution, the contribution must be returned. (See Chapter 2.)
- **Itemize Payments Made by Agents**
  If an agent or independent contractor makes expenditures of $500 or more on your behalf, you must disclose detailed information about the expenditure. (See Chapter 7.)

[1] There is an exception for candidates who will not receive **any** monetary contributions from others and who will spend less than $1,000 on their campaign. (See Chapters 2 and 5.)

- **Notify Contributors of $5,000 or More**
  You must notify individuals and business entities that contribute $5,000 or more to your campaign that they will have reporting obligations if they contribute $10,000 or more in a calendar year. (See Chapter 3.)
- **Contribution and Expenditure Limits**
  State candidates are subject to contribution limits (including loans and extensions of credit) and may voluntarily limit campaign expenditures. Contributions to any committee controlled by another state candidate or officeholder (including ballot measure committees) are also subject to limits. There are restrictions on receiving contributions after an election. (See Chapter 1.)
- **Identify Mass Mailings**
  If more than 200 pieces of mail are sent in a calendar month, your name (or your committee's name) and address must be printed on the outside of the mailing in no less than 6-point type and a contrasting color. (See Chapter 4.) You must also retain a copy of each mailing and record the date, the method of postage, and the number of pieces. (See Chapter 2.) Note: You are not required to print your committee's ID Number on any mailing or other advertisement.
- **Identify Telephone Calls**
  If campaign funds are spent for 500 or more telephone calls supporting your candidacy (other than calls made by you, your campaign manager, or volunteers), your committee must be identified as paying for the calls. (See Chapter 2.)
- **Do Not Accept Cash Contributions or Make Cash Expenditures**
  Cash contributions and cash expenditures of $100 or more are prohibited. Anonymous contributions of $100 or more are also prohibited. (See Chapter 10.)
- **Use of Campaign Funds**
  Campaign funds may only be used for political, legislative, or governmental purposes. They cannot be used to make independent expenditures to support or oppose other state or local candidates. Campaign funds become "surplus" if you are defeated or leave office and further restrictions apply. (See Chapter 10.)